

Physical Therapy for Low Back Pain Relief

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general time period for low back pain

Patients suffering from most types of low back pain are often referred for **physical therapy for four weeks as an initial conservative (nonsurgical) treatment option** before considering other more aggressive treatments, including back surgery. The goals of physical therapy are to decrease back pain, increase function, and teach the patient a maintenance program to prevent future back problems.

Common forms of physical therapy include:
not as intense

1. **Passive physical therapy (modalities)**, which includes things done to the patient, such as heat application, ice packs and electrical stimulation. For example, a heating pad may be applied to warm up the muscles prior to doing exercising and stretching, and an ice pack may be used afterward to sooth the muscles and soft tissues.
- See [Physical Therapy: Passive PT \(Modalities\) for Back Pain](#)

Treatment for Back Pain Flare-Ups Video

focus on exercises

- **Active physical therapy**, which focuses on specific exercises and stretching. For most low back pain treatments, active exercise is the focus of the physical therapy program.



This article focuses on active physical therapy and exercise as a means to help recover from back problems and prevent or minimize future flare-ups of low back pain.

Article continues below

Exercise Benefits for Low Back Pain

how the abdominal muscles correlate

Video: Why is Exercise Important for Lower Back Pain?

two main areas

Lumbar spine (low back) stability is largely dependent on the supporting **abdominal (stomach) and low back musculature**. The abdominal muscles **provide the initial stabilizing support through their ability to generate pressure within the abdomen which is exerted posteriorly on the spine, thus providing an anterior support column (from the front of the spine)**. The low back muscles stabilize the spine from the back and lead to posterior support. Simply stated, the bony spine and discs are surrounded by muscles, and the stronger these specific muscles are, the less stress is placed on the discs and joints of the spine. The patients should develop a 'belt' of muscle around their spine.



In This Article:

- Physical Therapy for Low Back Pain Relief
- [Specific Low Back Pain Exercises](#)
- [Video: Why is Exercise Important for Lower Back Pain?](#)

not much to do with treatment more of a time pain

There is a substantial amount of medical literature supporting specific physical therapy exercises for the treatment of low back pain. While most episodes of low back pain are **self limiting and will get better on their own**, active exercise plays an important role in helping reduce the patient's pain and improving subsequent function in patients with low back pain. An ongoing exercise program also reduces the likelihood and severity of future occurrences of low back

pain.

See [Physical and Occupational Therapy Offer Benefits for Neuropathic Pain](#)

Article continues below

Physical Therapy Before and After Back Surgery

There is substantial evidence supporting the benefits of physical therapy and exercise both before and after back surgery. The strength and stability that physical therapy provides can significantly shorten a patient's recovery time after surgery. Physical therapy and exercise is considered an important part of most back pain patients' treatments, including those undergoing non-surgical and surgical care. This is because patients with low back pain are most likely to recover when the patient is in optimum physical condition. Unless there is a contraindication for physical therapy or a patient requires emergency surgery, most patients are advised to undergo a trial of physical therapy prior to considering back surgery.

mostly
for after
surgery
rather
than
pain
without
that can
heal on
its own

- See [Exercise Prior to Spine Fusion Surgery](#)
or [Rehabilitation and Exercise Following Spine Surgery](#)

For many patients with low back pain, it is usually advisable to first consult a physician who can diagnose the patient's condition and rule out any serious contraindications for physical therapy, such as a fracture or tumor. Many patients find it most helpful to be monitored by a physical therapist to ensure follow through and avoid problems. Once the initial phase of therapy is complete, those patients who continue to follow an exercise program are often the most successful in managing their low back pain. exercises are long-term